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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, November 4, 1935

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "FALL AND WINTER GREENS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S.D.A.

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Some of our vegetable crops we value for their roots or underground parts; some for their flowers; others for their seeds. But those we prize for their leaves and stems concern us right now when freezing weather has put most gardens out of business for the coming months.

You know, in the last twenty years or so, we Americans have come to depend on greens almost as much as what we call "staples" in our daily meals. We have cultivated a taste for green things so that we don't feel the day is complete unless at least one green vegetable has appeared on the table. What's more, we've learned to value greens for their minerals and vitamins as well as for their refreshing taste. And that's a good thing for American health.

This common term "greens", we generally use for any of the green leaves we cook for the table -- spinach, mustard, dandelion, turnip, and beet tops. But the cabbage family offers other vegetables that by rights belong on this list of green things for fall and winter -- cabbage itself, of course, and also collards, kale, brussels sprouts, broccoli and cauliflower. But wait a minute. Cauliflower is white, so it doesn't fit under the heading of greens, but just the same, it counts as a green vegetable for winter meals.

Of all the vegetables I've mentioned, cabbage is far and away the best seller. But next to it comes spinach. Spinach has had to stand up under plenty of joking and prejudice. But it has increased in popularity just the same. When all the home-grown greens are gone, still our markets have a steady supply of spinach from Texas and eastern Maryland and Virginia, where market gardeners raise it to meet the winter demand. During the winter season, spinach also grows in South Carolina, and along the warm coast of the State of Washington. The gardeners gather and pack it in bushel baskets with crushed ice among the leaves and ship it in refrigerator cars to all parts of the country all through the winter. Something like 70,000 to 80,000 acres of spinach grow in these United States every year just for market and commercial canning. Beside that, plenty of people grow spinach in their own gardens, but I haven't the figures on the home-garden crop. Speaking of canned spinach, of course, you know you can use it in nearly all the ways that you use fresh spinach. And the food-value of the canned product is very nearly the same as that of the fresh-cooked leaves.

Now about the cabbage family. First, let's consider those two hardy members -- collards and kale. Collards are a standby in the South, but nowadays you often find them in northern city markets. They have broad, cabbage-like leaves but the rosette of tender bleached leaves at the top of the stalk is the edible part. On the other hand, kale has curly, dark-green leaves in a thick



bunch. Brussels sprouts are like miniature cabbage heads. They grow up and down the tall stalks of a certain kind of cabbage and are on the market in the fall and early winter -- sometimes later on as well. As for broccoli -- there's a member of the cabbage family that hailed originally from Italy. The kind that is most familiar is called "Italian sprouting broccoli." But we have adopted it and are planting it in many gardens in recent years. So you'll find broccoli more and more popular in American markets and also cheaper. It is on the market now and will be -- practically all through the winter. You know, broccoli is probably the only vegetable that we eat stem-flower-leaf-and-all except for the large main stem and root. Young stalks with the flowers still in the making are the tender ones. When you buy, be sure the stalks are fresh and green.

Except for cauliflower and broccoli, greens for eating should never show flower or seed stems -- only fresh green leaves and tender stalks.

We used to think a dish of greens was useful only as roughage and as an aid to appetites. The nutritionists now say that all green leafy vegetables have other good qualities. For one thing, they're rich in such useful minerals as iron and calcium. For another, they're rich in vitamins, especially vitamins A and B and C. As for the appetite vitamin, C, you'll save more of that if you avoid cooking the greens too long or in too much water. The rule for cooking is: Cook in an uncovered kettle in very little water -- only what clings to the leaves after washing, and cook only until wilted. Season with salt, pepper, and butter, or with salt pork or bacon, or meat drippings with chopped onion browned in them. If you like a vaguely tart flavor, add a little lemon juice or vinegar.

For a spinach souffle, mix chopped raw spinach with white sauce, fold this into the beaten whites of eggs, with or without bread crumbs, and bake in a slow oven. A still more substantial spinach dish is a mold or timbale, made of chopped spinach in white sauce mixed with beaten eggs and baked slowly like a custard.

Now about kale and collards. These two hardy greens are good panned with milk. Wash the leaves thoroughly, drain and cut them in pieces. For each quart of greens, allow 2 tablespoons of butter or other fat, and melt this in a frying pan. Add the greens to the frying pan and cover them to keep in the steam. Then cook them slowly for 15 to 20 minutes. Sift a teaspoon of flour over the greens, mix well, pour in half a cup of milk or cream, and stir until thickened. Season with salt and pepper. At this point, your panned greens are ready to serve.

Well, we haven't had time to talk about cooking brussels sprouts and broccoli. Listen in tomorrow and we'll discuss this during our question-and-answer period.

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